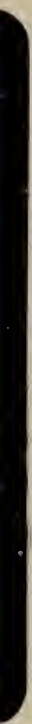


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Letter No. 2357

April 7, 1988

**HIGHLIGHTS OF  
PROSPECTIVE  
PLANTINGS**

According to a report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, corn growers intend to plant 66 million 900 thousand acres in 1988, up 2 percent from last year. Soybean prospective plantings are at 58 million acres, up 1 percent from last year. If realized, this would be the second lowest acreage since 1976. Winter wheat planted acres are estimated at 48 million 600 thousand acres, down slightly from 1987. Durum wheat acres are estimated at 3 million 730 thousand acres, up 12 percent, and other spring wheat acreage is expected to total 12 million 800 thousand acres, off 7 percent from a year ago.

**JANUARY  
AG TRADE**

The U.S. agricultural export volume for January totaled 12 million 800 thousand tons, up 37 percent from the 9 million 400 thousand exported during January 1987, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The biggest gains were in wheat, up 115 percent; shell eggs, up 97 percent; and horticultural products, up 45 percent. The January export value totaled \$2 billion 880 million, up 33 percent over January 1987. Largely responsible for the increase in value were: wheat, apples, almonds, fresh grapefruit, corn, soybeans, cattle hides and beef and veal.

**OCT.-JAN.  
AG TRADE**

The export volume of the U.S. from October through January totaled 49 million tons, 17 percent higher than the same period a year ago and the highest level to date in three years, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The export value totaled \$11 billion 300 million, up 15 percent over the levels of a year ago. Exports are up in seven of the top 10 U.S. markets over last year with gains ranging from 3 percent to the European Community to 41 percent to South Korea. The other countries on the plus side are: Japan, Canada, USSR, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

**TRADE  
SURPLUS**

The January 1988 agricultural trade surplus totaled \$1 billion 70 million compared to \$711 million last January, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This brings the Oct.-Jan. trade surplus to \$4 billion 320 million, which is \$1 billion 400 million over the same 4-month period a year ago and the highest in three years.

**CORN SALES  
TO USSR**

On March 31, private exporters reported to the U.S. Department of Agriculture export sales of 101,600 metric tons of corn for delivery to the USSR during the 1987-88 marketing year. Sales of wheat and corn to the USSR for delivery during the fifth year of the Long Term Grain Supply Agreement total 11,581,900 tons, of which wheat is 7,482,800 tons and corn is 4,099,100 tons.



VARROA MITE  
QUARANTINES

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has restricted the interstate movement of bees and bee equipment from Florida, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Washington and Wisconsin because of infestation of the Varroa mite. The Varroa mite is an external parasite of adult bees and their developing larvae, or brood. It causes decreased brood, deformed bees and weakening of the colony's ability to pollinate plants and produce honey.

LOTS OF  
PORK CHOPS

The inventory of all hogs and pigs on March 1, 1988, in the 10 states conducting quarterly hog surveys is estimated at 40½ million head, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is 6 percent above both last March 1 and March 1, 1986. The 10 states are: Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Carolina and Ohio. Of the 40½ million, 5 million 420 thousand are for breeding, and 35 million 100 thousand are going to market.

CCC INTEREST  
RATE: 6-5/8%

The commodity loans disbursed in April by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation carry a 6-5/8 percent interest rate for April, down from 6-3/4 percent.

NEW EC  
SUBSIDIES

As a part of its price policy for 1988/89, the European Community has proposed a new processing subsidy designed to stimulate grain use in compound feeds, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Although this subsidy might reduce surplus supplies of grain available for export, it also would hurt demand for imported non-grain feed ingredients, particularly U.S. corn gluten feed. Under the proposal, feed compounders would receive a subsidy representing the difference between grain market prices and the much lower imported non-grain feed ingredients.

A CHICKEN  
FIGHT?

The European Community's Poultry Management Committee raised export subsidies to record highs for countries importing poultry meat from the United States under the Export Enhancement Program. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, effective March 21, the EC Commission raised export subsidies by 20 to 32 percent to reach an average level of about U.S. \$722 per ton. The new subsidy covers Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Egypt, Iraq, Singapore and the Canary Islands, countries already importing U.S. chicken under the Export Enhancement Program.

NEW TRADE  
LEADS

Beginning April 8, the Journal of Commerce, a daily newspaper published in Wash., D.C., began publishing trade leads on market opportunities for U.S. agricultural exporters whenever they become available. Each year, the Foreign Agricultural Service received about 4,000 trade inquiries from overseas firms that seek to buy or represent U.S. agricultural products, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Up until now, these leads were disseminated to subscribers through the mail, and published electronically. The Journal of Commerce will provide a faster means of communicating with exporters who cannot access trade leads electronically. It will also make these leads available to a wider audience.

CHANGE IN  
DAIRY EXPORT  
INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Commodity Credit Corporation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture will no longer accept bonus bids for four products under the Dairy Export Incentive Program. These products are: Nonfat dry milk, whole milk powder, Cheddar cheese and bulk American cheese for manufacturing. CCC will continue to receive bonus bids for the commercial export of butter, butteroil and anhydrous milkfat.

CROP ACREAGE  
BASES REDUCED

The crop acreage bases have been reduced more than 14 million acres on farms containing acreage placed in the Conservation Reserve Program during the first five sign-ups. The revised total acreage enrolled in CRP during the first five sign-ups is 22,150,025 acres. In the 6th sign-up held in February, producers submitted bids for an additional 4,507,170 acres to be placed in the program.

FROM OUR RADIO  
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1610 (Weekly 13½ min documentary) On this edition of AGRICULTURE USA Gary Crawford talks to Ambassador Clayton Yeutter, U.S. Trade Representative, about the current trade problems with Japan, the negotiations with the Soviet Union on a new long-term grain agreement, the attempts to ratify the Canada/U.S. free trade agreement and also the U.S. proposal for all countries to eliminate farm and trade subsidies.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1598 (Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Acreage reduction sign-up reminder; Soviet grain production; Russian wheat aphid; New study on livestock products.

CONSUMER TIME #1090 (Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Home grown tomatoes; Brown apples; New food allergy booklet; Animal products and your health; and Drought tolerant grass.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE Mon, Apr. 11, U.S. crop production, Soviet grain outlook, World supply and demand; Tues, Apr. 12, Weekly crop and weather, World agriculture grain production, World oilseed situation, World cotton situation; Thurs, Apr. 14, Oil crops outlook, Ag resources report; Fri, Apr. 15, Floriculture production, Milk production. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

TELEVISION SERVICE programs, A BETTER WAY, DOWN TO EARTH, AGRICULTURAL UPDATE and SATELLITE NEWS are available on satellite Westar IV, audio 6.2 or 6.8 as follows:

Thursdays AG UPDATE/SATELLITE NEWS, 7:30-7:45 p.m. ET Transponder 12D

Saturdays A BETTER WAY, 10:00-10:30 a.m. ET Transponder 9X  
ORIGINAL DOWN TO EARTH, 10:30-11:00 a.m. ET Transponder 9X  
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 11:00-11:15 a.m. ET Transponder 9X

Mondays A BETTER WAY, 8:00-8:30 a.m. ET Transponder 12D  
REPEAT DOWN TO EARTH, 8:30-9:00 a.m. ET Transponder 12D  
UPLINK SATELLITE NEWS/AG UPDATE, 9:00-9:15 a.m. ET Transponder 12D

A BETTER WAY is also available on The Learning Channel SATCOM 3R, Transponder 2, Audio 6.8 each Thursday at 10:30 a.m. ET.



OFF MIKE

(WAY OFF!)

A belated "Happy Birthday" to Everett Mitchell, who turned 90 on March 15. The Radio and TV Service of the USDA has misplaced its Chief. He was last seen heading into the sunset on April Fool's Day, riding a white Nissan. If you spot him on the prairie or on a Rocky Mt. hillside, please point him in an easterly direction. Tell him not to worry about office work, since we're piling it all into neat stacks on his desk. He forgot to take along a tape filled with messages from his fellow workers. He also forgot his button collection, with important messages, such as I Love Dairy Goats, Hogs are Beautiful, Local Chick Makes Good, Try a Virgin Islands Rum, and Freight Trains. We're sure he wants to keep these. If you find him, please send him back. He used to answer to the name of Jim Johnson, probably still does. Thanks!

Farm Broadcasters Letter  
Radio and Television, Rm. 410A  
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U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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If you folks want to read some nice, newsy stuff about yourselves, you'll have to give us some nice, newsy items. Otherwise, you're going to be stuck with my ramblings for a couple of months.

*Margaret T. Desatnik*

Margaret T. Desatnik, Acting Chief  
Radio and Television Division